Mr. George Chakyamuri.—May I know the materials?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—My enquiries in the matter.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Did the Hon'ble Member try to find out that the signatories are real persons and whether they have really signed it?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—I cannot waste my time further because it is unnecessary.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Does the Hon'ble Member believe that the lady Member is also interested?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—I never submitted that.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Has she not sent a letter to the Diwan in this matter?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—It appears from the proceedings that a letter was sent by her.

President.—The question time is over.

Location of toddy shops in Trichur.

128. Mrs. Swaris.—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) if all toddy shops serving the Trichur Town were not located for the very start of the independent shop system at the boundaries of the then Town;

(b) have not the Town limits extended subsequently; if so, how far the Town limit has gone beyond the Kizhakkumpattukara toddy shop towards the east and south?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—(a) It is not possible to say anything definite in this matter at this distant date.

(b) Yes. About six furlongs to the east and about three to four furlongs to the south.

129. Mrs. Swaris.—Will the Government be pleased to state which are the other toddy shops that serve the Trichur Town at present?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—(1) Kokkala and (2) Aranattukara shops.

The beggar problem in the State.

130. Mr. P. Raman Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) whether the Government is aware of the daily increasing gravity of the begger problem in the State;

(b) if the answer is in the affirmative, whether it has taken any steps to solve it;

(c) if steps have been taken, what are they?

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—(a) No.

(b) and (c) No answer is called for in view of the reply to sub-division (a).

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

131. Mr. P. Raman Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(a) whether it has received any communication dated 11th June 1932 on the beggar problem from Mr. K. S. Kasturi Ayyar, Chief Court Vakil, Ernakulam ;

(b) if the answer is in the affirmative, what action has been taken on such communication ;

(c) will the Government be pleased to place on the Council Table Mr. Kasturi Ayyar's communications on the subject together with the Government's reply to the same ?

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—(a) Yes.

(b) It was lodged.

(c) Copies of the correspondence are placed on the table. (*Appendix VI*).

Erumapatti Registry Office.

132. Mr. P. Krishna Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(1) whether representations have not been made for the location of a registry office at Erumapatti ;

(2) have the Government any objection to open one ?

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—(1) Yes.

(2) Under the present financial condition, it is not possible to grant the request.

പള്ളുരുത്തി അധഃകൃത നൈറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ.

133. മിസ്റ്റർ. കെ. പി. വള്ളോൻ.—പള്ളുരുത്തി അധഃകൃത നൈറ്റ് സ്കൂളിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ച് അധഃകൃതരുടെ സംരക്ഷകൻ ചെയ്തിട്ടുള്ള റിപ്പോർട്ടിന്റെ ഒരു കോപ്പി ഈ മേശപ്പുറത്തു വച്ചുതരുവാൻ ദയവുണ്ടാകുമോ ?

രാമവർമ്മ തമ്പുരാൻ.—പള്ളുരുത്തി അധഃകൃത നൈറ്റ് സ്കൂളിനെപ്പറ്റിയാതൊരു റിപ്പോർട്ടും അധഃകൃത സംരക്ഷകൻ അയച്ചിട്ടില്ല.

പുല്ലറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ.

134. മിസ്റ്റർ. കെ. പി. വള്ളോൻ.—പുല്ലറ്റ് സ്കൂളിന് ഇതുവരേയും ഗ്രാന്റ് കൊടുക്കാതിരിയ്ക്കുവാനുള്ള കാരണമെന്തു ?

മിസ്റ്റർ ഐ. ഏ൯. മേനോൻ.—പുല്ലറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ ഫസ്റ്റ് ഇടവത്തിലാണ് ആരംഭിച്ചതു്. ഒരു കൊല്ലം ക്രമമായി നടത്തിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഫസ്റ്റ് ഇടവം മുതൽ ഗ്രാന്റ് കൊടുക്കുന്നതാണ്. സാധാരണയായി സ്കൂൾ തുറന്നു് ഒരു കൊല്ലം ക്രമമായി നടത്തിയതിനുശേഷം മാത്രമേ ഇപ്പോൾ ഗ്രാന്റ് കൊടുക്കുന്നതിനുള്ളു.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

capacity of 4,000 cusecs Rs. 9,000

Stage IV.

1. Marathakara diversion of the Manali river ,, 97,000

APPENDIX VI.

(Vide Answer to Question No. 131.)

Letter dated 11th June 1932, from K. S. Kasturi Ayyar, Ernakulam.

I desire to invite your kind attention to the 'beggar' problem which is assuming grave proportions every day and which bids fair to become sooner or later—perhaps sooner than later—a menace to the peace and comfort of every individual home in the town. Your official position and residential arrangements rightly protect you from the invasion of beggars and naturally, therefore you are not in a position to judge for yourself the daily increasing gravity of the problem. It is just possible that some of our well-placed local officials and non-officials can and do find means of resisting these onslaughts from beggars, without giving any thought to the question of finding any solution to the problem. But any one who chooses to acquaint himself with the realities of the situation can observe for himself every day swarms of beggars invading every possible middle-class house and making the lives of the occupants of the house absolutely intolerable. The provocative shouts that proceed from these beggars are simply maddening. To attempt to satisfy the claims of all the beggars that flock at your gate, at any time of the day and every day of the week, is to attempt the impossible, for it is beyond the means of any average citizen. To try to discriminate and give alms only to those who are unable to work and earn their bread, only invites showers of abuse on your devoted head. To endeavour to argue with the able bodied among these professional beggars that, being able to work, they should seek and do work and earn their daily bread, is to make yourself perfectly ridiculous with them. In this hopeless situation you may think of the apparently easy course of trying to dispose of a few of them by giving what little you can afford and thus get rid of this nuisance. But that only makes the situation worse for you; for those that lie in wait for you at a little distance instinctly discover your weakness and instantly lay siege to your gate. The situation is now desperate and maddening. You are simply at bay. If you lose your balance for a moment and threaten to eject them, you are done for, for they at once challenge you to carry out your threat and, if you want to avoid scenes at your gate for the delectation of passers by, you have to submit yourself to the inevitable and throw up the sponge. The only alternative left for you is to send them away with something for each and thank yourself for all your pains. But the matter does not end here, for your surrender is only a signal for fresh assaults from other batches repeated many times a day and every day of the week. If an Indian, particularly a high caste Hindu, is not driven mad by the scenes above described, it is because his traditional fund of patience and forbearance is inexhaustible. I am sure that no Englishman will keep looking on such a deplorable state of things without trying to find a satisfactory solution for the same. In your country you have your own Poor Laws, Work-Houses National Insurance, Old Age Pensions, Unemployment Relief, etc., which seek to do social justice. With the knowledge and experience of such matters at your back you are eminently qualified to tackle this problem successfully. I, therefore, respectfully appeal to you, Sir, to take this matter into your serious consideration.

The beggars can be roughly classed under various heads. Most of them come under the category of 'able-bodied' including men, women and children who can do work of some sort or other, provided work is found for them and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

they are compelled to do work suited to their individual capacity. Almost all belonging to this class make begging their profession, day in and day out, some of them assuming the mask of religious mendicants of various kinds. The next class includes the deaf, the dumb, the handless and the like, who really deserve help. Another important class of beggars includes those that are afflicted with loathsome and incurable diseases who not only expose themselves on public roads and other places of public resort, but very frequently invade private houses and carry contagion into the latter. There is no question that this class deserves special treatment and Governmental support at the hands of any administration which claims to be civilised. There is a law in this State as elsewhere, which applies to this class of beggars so far as their appearance in places of public resort is concerned. But it remains almost a dead letter, because the authorities concerned do not appear to regard it as their business to put the law into motion.

It seems to be a well recognised principle in all well-ordered Governments, both ancient and modern, that the support of those who are unable to support themselves, for one reason or another, is the paramount duty of all administrations worth the name. The rapidly developing sense of social justice among all modern peoples has brought this principle to the very forefront of every administration. It is, therefore, time that our Government also woke up and did something, in right earnest, to solve the problem. In India of the past, the problem found a solution in private philanthropy which perhaps it does even now to a very limited extent. But with the increase in population and in the complexities of modern life, re-inforced by world depression, the days of unaided private philanthropy have gone by and the day has arrived for organised public and State relief. The State has to take the initiative and there is no escaping from its responsibility. The usual plea of want of funds cannot stand serious examination. Funds will have to be found and can be found, if only the Government will think less of Garden Parties and illuminations and more about the poor. Even here, private philanthropy can pool its resources and come to the help of the Government if a right lead is given. No time is more auspicious than the present for Governmental action, because in His Highness the Maharaja we have fortunately a ruler whose whole-hearted support in this sacred cause can be easily enlisted. Any tinkering with this problem will bring no good but might even make matters worse. In order to ensure the successful working of any solution, any scheme that may be thought of will have to be made applicable to the whole of Cochin so that relief might be distributed over a wider area and congestion in particular places prevented. Legislation may also become necessary to guarantee relief to the "bona fide" poor in Cochin, to prevent the influx of alien beggars from the adjoining States, to find either work or, in the alternative, food for those who are able to work and to deal with those who could but would not work. All these are matters of detail which could be worked out after a decision is taken on the main question. I have only just indicated the pressing nature of this serious problem and Government's responsibility in doing everything it can to help to find a solution for the same. It is my fervent hope and belief that this appeal will not fail to strike a responsive chord in your large heart.

Letter L. Dis. 16695/1107, dated 4th July 1932 from the Secretary to the Diwan to Mr. K. L. Kasturi Ayyar, Ernakulam.

Your communication dated 11th June 1932 on the 'Beggar Problem' has been lodged. It is impossible at the present time for financial reasons to adopt the suggestions which you make.

Letter dated 17th July 1932 from Mr. K. S. Kasturi Ayyar, Ernakulam.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

I am in receipt of your kind reply Dis. No. 16695 of 1107 dated the 4th instant to my letter concerning the beggar problem. I regret the somewhat cavalier treatment you have chosen to give to my letter relating to a very grave problem. You have disposed of my letter without disposing of the matter to which it relates. I feel particularly distressed at the 'defeatist' attitude you have taken in the matter, for it can never be really 'impossible' to do the right thing at the right moment. All that is needed is "the will to do."

I am afraid that your decision, turning down my request at the very threshold has been a little off-hand. Beyond indicating the lines of approach into this problem in a very general way, I did not make any definite suggestions which would necessitate the Government's shouldering the whole financial burden which any satisfactory solution of the problem might probably involve. All that I ventured to suggest was that "the State has to take the initiative and that there is no escaping from its responsibility." I had, no doubt, anticipated a possible objection on the score of want of funds. But the position of a Government which refuses relief to the destitute and infirm on the plea of want of funds, while it has no hesitation in spending lakhs and lakhs on schemes of doubtful utility and questionable wisdom is not very much unlike the position of a father who, while sending some of his sons to distant foreign lands, at great expense, for higher studies, refuses to feed and clothe his helpless minor sons and daughters. If it be true that such a father will be held up to execration by all right- thinking men, it cannot be less true that such a Government will deserve condemnation. The plea of financial reasons has no leg to stand upon. *Funds* the Government always has and will continue to have. The whole trouble is in the allocation of the same. The necessary funds will certainly be released if only the Government will change its angle of vision. The traditional policy of pampering the upper Ten and starving the under-dog must cease. The whole world is in the melting pot. The scales have fallen from the eyes of the voiceless multitude and the thinking portion of the civilised world has wakened up to the realities of the situation. The submerged classes have had their hearts stirred by new hopes and aspirations. This fact must be faced fairly and squarely. If people's money in the hands of the Government will not reach their starving fellow-beings, they will want to know the reason why it will not. The resources of our State have—if Government administration Reports are safe guides—almost doubled themselves during the last three decades and more. Nevertheless, the destitute and the infirm stand exactly where they stood before. There has been so far, no attempt to permanently ameliorate their deplorable condition. 'Development Departments,' 'rural reconstruction,' 'protection of depressed classes' and similar catch phrases will no longer satisfy hungry stomachs which demand solid food to be put into them. If the existing resources of the Government exhaust themselves before they reach the destitute the orthodox process of budget-making must be reversed so that the exhaustion may take place, if need be, at the other end. The "have not's" must be served first and the "have's" must be asked to wait. The insistent demands of the needy and the helpless for food, clothing and shelter must be met first before the Government goes beyond to depths and launches out into thoughtless, unnecessary and costly, if not perilous undertakings. If the Government will have the necessary imagination and courage and sympathy, 'financial reasons' will automatically disappear.

The decision contained in your reply to my letter seems to be based on the assumption that the solution of the beggar problem would necessarily

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

consume a large slice of the Government's revenues. I am not sure if you had the necessary statistics before you. So far as I am aware the Government has not yet caused a census of the poor to be taken. If this is done—with the help of the statistical returns of the latest decennial census and by other means, if necessary—we shall know where we stand. An analysis of the statistics thus rendered available will yield the figures of those who cannot really help themselves and those who can. With regard to the latter, all that is necessary is to legislate against their begging in public and legislation does not cost anything. If those who can work, refuse to work, they have the option to starve and nobody need bother about them. To such of them as are willing, work will be found by their own individual personal efforts which may, however, be supplemented, wherever possible, by the help rendered by the various departments of the State. This is a matter of detail which must be left over for consideration at the proper stage. If the able-bodied are thus eliminated, there will be left only those who owing to infirmity, incurable diseases and other similar causes are absolutely helpless. Unless the Government wants to abdicate its true functions and remain a pompous futility, the Government, willy-nilly, has got to take care of this latter class of beggars. If the Government will refuse to do so on the plea of financial reasons, the Government's apparent solicitude for the so-called 'depressed' classes—a much mis-used expression by the way—will be regarded as a mere camouflage.

Even assuming, without admitting, that the beggar problem will demand for a satisfactory solution, large sums of money, the difficulty in finding funds is, by no means, insurmountable. From the prince to the peasant we have, among us, large numbers of people whose only business in life seems to be to make their piles for their own wives and children, utterly regardless of their obligations to society at large and to suffering humanity in particular. To them a right lead should be given reminding them of their duty and none can do this more effectively than H. H. the Maharaja himself. In the sister State of Travancore H. H. the Maharaja has shown the way by making a gift of half-a-lakh of rupees from his Privy Purse for starting a home for the destitute and the infirm. (Please vide 'the Hindu' of the 10th March last). In your own native land, when the Government was faced with a financial crisis, H. M. the King set a gracious and noble example by cutting down his Civil List which was immediately followed by H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. With these noble examples before us, there can be nothing wrong in putting our Princes and peoples on their honour and appealing to them to make reasonable contributions to this sacred cause. There can be no reasonable doubt about the result of such an appeal if it comes from the Government and in the name of His Highness the Maharaja himself. If there is nothing wrong in the Prince of Wales issuing a call to the British people to 'buy British', equally there can be nothing wrong in our own Elaya Raja issuing a similar call to "help the poor" and, for obvious reasons, none is better fitted to take the lead than His Highness the Elaya Raja himself. If such an appeal falls flat and evokes no response from those who ought to know their civic duty, a Government which is going to introduce income-tax into the State shortly, cannot be wanting in resources or resourcefulness in dealing with them. I do not want to enter into details here. What I respectfully wish to emphasise is that, if only the Government will make up its mind to attack the problem, the attempt will not have to be given up for want of funds. Extraordinary situations may demand heroic remedies. That, probably, is the doctrine on which the proposed income-tax is going

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

to be based and justified. If that is so, why not apply the same principle to such a noble cause as the relief of distress? I hope that the Government has not reached the stage of bankruptcy in statesmanship just yet. I repeat that all is needed is the "will to dare and do".

I, therefore, again respectfully request that you may be pleased to go into this matter with all the care and anxiety that it deserves. I fervently hope that this humble appeal of mine, on behalf of the voiceless thousands in distress, will not turn out to be a mere cry in the wilderness.

Letter L. Dis. 18675/1107, dated 28th July 1932, from the Secretary to the Diwan to Mr. K. S. Kasturi Ayyar, Ernakulam.

In my letter dated 4th July 1932, I have already stated that for financial reasons it is not possible for the Darbar to adopt at present the suggestions you made. I can only add that the Darbar wishes that private philanthropic agencies will take the necessary initiative in the matter.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly